

Message Text

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ACTION ACDA-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 IO-13 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 EB-08 NRC-05 OES-07 SOE-02 DODE-00
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-----074340 011953Z /43

R 312209Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8726
INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 2392

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PARM, TECH
SUBJECT: NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY (NPT) ADHERENCE

REF: STATE 072980 (NOTAL)

1. POLCONS HAS DISCUSSED STATUS OF NPT THINKING WITH DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL POLITICAL AFFAIRS, CARLOS BUSTOS, AT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. BUSTOS SAID THAT INTERNAL GOC STUDIES ARE IN PROGRESS (SEPARATE REVIEWS BY THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, THE DEFENSE MINISTRY AND THE CHILEAN NUCLEAR ENERGY COMMISSION), BUT HE WAS UNWILLING OR UNABLE TO SAY WHEN THEY MIGHT BE COMPLETED. BUSTOS DID NOT INDICATE THAT A CHANGE IN GOC POLICY ON THIS ISSUE IS IMMINENT OR, DOWN THE ROAD, VERY LIKELY.

2. WHILE GOC OFFICIALS DISCLAIM ANY INTEREST BY CHILE IN DEVELOPING OR POSSESSING ATOMIC WEAPONS, THERE IS NO QUESTION THE CHILEAN MILITARY VIEWS THE NPT, AS WELL AS TLAELOLCO, IN SECURITY TERMS. THEY DO NOT TRUST ARGENTINA NOT TO DEVELOP WEAPONS. THEY VIEW SELF-DENIAL BY CHILE IN THE ABSENCE OF IDENTICAL ACTION BY ARGENTINA AS PSYCHOLOGICALLY WEAKENING CHILE'S SECURITY POSTURE VIS-A-VIS THAT COUNTRY. THESE CONCERNS HAVE, OF COURSE, BEEN HEIGHTENED IN RECENT MONTHS BY THE BEAGLE CHANNEL DISPUTE. IN ADDITION, CHILE REMAINS SUSPICIOUS OF PERUVIAN INTENTIONS IN
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THE NORTH AND, MOST RECENTLY, BOLIVIA HAS AGAIN BROKEN OFF RELATIONS. IN SUM, THIS SEEMS LIKE A PARTICULARLY UNLIKELY TIME FOR THE CHILEAN MILITARY, WHICH HOLDS ALL THE TOP POSITIONS IN THE THREE AGENCIES REVIEWING THE ISSUE, TO COME UP WITH A BASIC POLICY CHANGE.

3. THE KEY TO CHILEAN ADHERENCE TO THE NPT REMAINS ARGENTINA.

IF PROGRESS IS BEING MADE ON THAT FRONT, AND THE GOC IS AWARE
THAT SECRETARY VANCE DISCUSSED THE TOPIC DURING HIS NOVEMBER TRIP
TO BUENOS AIRES, THEN CHILE WOULD FIND IT HARD NOT TO FOLLOW SUIT.
BARRING THAT, WE NOTE THE VARIOUS MESSAGES DESCRIBING THE NON-
PROLIFERATION ACT OF 1978 STRESS, AS A CENTRAL PURPOSE,
ENCOURAGEMENT FOR UNIVERSAL RATIFICATION OF THE NPT. WHILE CHILE
HAS MANAGED THUS FAR TO GET NUCLEAR ENERGY TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
ELSEWHERE, PRIMARILY FROM SPAIN, IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IN FURTHER
DISCUSSIONS HERE, TO BE ABLE TO POINT TO SPECIFIC ELEMENTS
IN THE ACT THAT MIGHT BE CONDUCIVE TO CHILEAN RECONSIDERATION
OF ITS PRESENT NPT POSTURE.
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